

Effective, efficient, economical

Reducing mowing in Park Department

In an effort to become a more “green,” sustainable community, the City’s Park Department was directed to examine its mowing procedures, specifically considering what areas might be landscaped in an alternative way.

Staff have since identified 12 locations throughout the city where native grass or hay could be used in place of the traditional mown grass. The result will be an annual savings of 970 gallons of fuel, a significant reduction in ozone-producing air pollution.

In addition to the environmental impact, the mowing changes will mean considerable cost savings for the department — more than \$75,000 a year.

To implement these changes, however, adjustments had to be made to certain City ordinances dealing with tall grasses. The ordinance changes accommodate both the new mowing plan and the native grass plantings that are part of the Sand Creek restoration

Mowing reduction plan

Location	Acres	Crop	Hours	Fuel savings	Total savings
Front of Water Mission	24.00	Hay	55	\$125.12	\$9,475.12
Field east of Wastewater Plant	2.75	Hay	9	\$63.47	\$1,613.65
Field south of Wastewater Plant	5.00	Hay	17	\$115.42	\$2,933.48
Wastewater Plant south to 14th	12.00	Native grass	40	\$277.00	\$7,039.00
Bike path, 14th to golf course	6.42	Native grass	21	\$148.17	\$3,765.84
Boyd waterway, 1st to Sand Creek	6.60	Native grass	66	\$283.80	\$11,425.92
Industrial Park	17.79	Hay	59	\$410.62	\$10,435.28
12th & Sherman, east side	1.00	Native grass	10	\$43.00	\$1,731.20
Blue Sky to Sand Creek	20.00	Native grass	67	\$461.67	\$11,732.23
Centennial Park, along Bike Path	1.30	Native grass	13	\$55.90	\$2,250.56
East Centennial & north of KDOT	12.00	Hay	40	\$277.00	\$7,039.00
East Centennial, cedars to burn pile	3.78	Hay	38	\$162.52	\$6,543.91
TOTALS	112.64		435	\$2,423.69	\$75,985.19



Native grasses

Native grasses are being used more and more throughout the country as cities look to be more environmentally friendly and cost-effective. Native grasses have drought-resistant roots that descend up to 10' for extraordinary erosion benefits, and require little to no irrigation or fertilization. Perennial native grasses and shrubs re-seed themselves, but do not invade crop areas as they take two to three years to mature. In short, rights-of-way and other green spaces can be beautiful and low-maintenance, helping reduce air pollution and lowering labor and equipment costs.



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Pursuing grant opportunities

One of the most rewarding ways for cities to stretch local tax dollars is to seek grant funding. Grants are not “free money” — the City is required to meet certain conditions and report progress to the grant maker as part of the agreement — but grants often allow us to accomplish goals sooner than if we had to budget General Fund dollars.

Over the past several years, grants have allowed the City to fund millions of dollars in construction projects, equipment purchases, and even hiring of personnel. The following is not a comprehensive list, but it gives a good overview of the grant funding the City has received in the past three years.

Police Department

Bullet-proof vests	\$3,690
Pole cameras	\$7,300
Tasers and in-car cameras	\$36,800
Drug Task Force investigator..	\$131,482
Surveillance equipment.....	\$10,000
In-car laptop computers	\$39,000

Fire/EMS

Urban search & rescue team...	\$440,000
Laptop computer	\$2,500
Six firefighters.....	\$650,280
Exhaust extraction system	\$63,300
Fire Station #3.....	\$2,942,365

Community development

South Kansas bike path	\$280,000
Playground surfacing.....	\$20,424

TOTAL \$4,627,141

This list only includes funds awarded through competitive grant-making and does not include KLINK resurfacing funds from the Kansas Department of Transportation, federal earmarks, FAA airport projects, or low-interest loan funds. That funding accounts for millions more in saved local tax dollars.

The list also does not reflect the total number of grants the City has pursued in recent years. Because grants are awarded competitively, the City has submitted many applications that were not successful. But the various departments are persistent about seeking every opportunity.

By far the City’s largest competitive grant award has been the Fire Station Construction Grant awarded as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009.



Grants Funding

In the U.S., grants most often come from a wide range of government departments or an even wider range of public and private trusts and foundations. According to the Foundation Center, these trusts and foundations number in excess of 88,000 and disperse in excess of \$40 billion every year.



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Conserving the City's resources

Although the term "conservation" is usually used in terms of environmental issues, it can also describe a simple effort to make the most of every available resource. And it's second nature to local governments, which are always looking for new ways to do more with less.

For the Public Works Department, which goes through large quantities of materials and supplies, conservation is simply a way of life. The cost savings are not dramatic individually, but over time, this attention to detail is a tremendous benefit to the organization as a whole.

The following is not a comprehensive list by any means, but it demonstrates the kind of effort that City employees make every day to save money and resources:

- All used motor oil is used to heat the shop area in an oil burning furnace. We therefore have no costs for sending out a hazardous material like used oil, and we are able to curtail heating costs with the furnace.
- Antifreeze is recycled by using a reconditioning machine that prepares the fluid for reuse in vehicles.
- We buy janitorial supplies in bulk and obtain quotes on commodities to obtain the best price.
- Several years ago we began using Strata motor oil in City vehicles. It costs a little more, but is a much longer lasting oil and we are able to go 12,000 miles between oil changes. Being able to extend the time between oil changes saves on the cost of new oil (\$200 per trash truck each time) and saves on personnel time to perform the duty.
- To treat slick and snow covered streets, we use a salt and haydite (70/30) mix rather than pure salt. Haydite is less expensive than salt and is a very angular aggregate that helps with traction on slick streets. Haydite is also more friendly to the environment and is much easier to acquire in large quantities.
- Researched and found extended life tires for the sanitation trucks that saved us \$12,000 per year.
- Materials like street millings, old Christmas trees, old brick street pavers, and plant material waste are all saved and reused in various ways.



"Green" results

Conserving resources means less waste. The primary goal may be to improve efficiency and stretch tax dollars, but another benefit is less trash, hazardous waste, and other materials that have to be disposed of. These are the kind of basic ecological efforts the City is already making that may become even more important in the future.



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Energy efficiency

In 2003 the City of Newton began working with TAC-Americas to develop a comprehensive energy savings project that would solve the City’s capital improvement needs while maximizing energy savings.

After an evaluation of energy use in each building, the City implemented the following upgrades:

- Installed a TAC Vista Energy Management System at City Hall, Fire Station 2, Library, and Recreation Center.
- Upgraded lighting to T8 fluorescent lamps and electronic ballasts at City Hall, Service Center, Fire Station 2, Fire Station 1, Library, and Recreation Center.

City Hall

- Installed new direct expansion air conditioning unit for Computer Room to provide isolation from central plant.
- Installed new automatic chilled water control valves on four multi-zone air-handling units to provide individual modulation of chilled water coils.
- Converted multi-zone air-handling units to variable air volume.

Fire Station #2

- Replaced 25-year-old hot water boiler and condensing unit for multi-zone air handling unit .
- Tested and adjusted multi-zone air handling unit to solve air-flow problems in building and bring system back to design conditions.
- Replaced condensing unit for Radio Room air handling unit.

Library

- Replaced 30-year-old hot water boiler and water-cooled chiller.
- Replaced condensing units for Bessmer meeting room and computer room.

Recreation Center

- Replaced multi-zone rooftop units with three new single-zone rooftop units serving the first-floor offices, locker rooms, and meeting room.
- Replaced six 29-year-old rooftop units with direct expansion cooling and gas heating to serve the auditorium, handball courts, multi-purpose room, and aerobics rooms.
- Replaced 29-year-old gas heating unit and installed new electric cooling rooftop units for the gymnasium.
- Replaced 29-year-old gas heating-only rooftop units for pool area.

Total savings (March 2003-May 2008)**\$196,067**



“Green” results

Energy efficiency saves money, of course, but it’s also a benefit to the environment. The City’s energy upgrades since 2003 have saved more than 2.6 million kilowatt hours, which equates to 2,112 tons of CO² and 574 acres of trees.



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Fire/EMS receives new aerial platform

Newton Fire/EMS has received delivery of its new 100-foot aerial platform truck, which will offer an enhanced level of service and protection for the community. The truck replaces the department's 1984 ladder truck, which had been in use for several years past its original 20-year lifespan.

The City had been setting aside funds for more than 20 years in its equipment reserve fund to purchase a new truck, which enabled the City to pay cash rather than bonding the purchase. The City had also vigorously pursued grant funding in the past several years but was unsuccessful.

In 2008, the truck manufacturer offered the City the opportunity to purchase a demo vehicle, which allowed the City to acquire an almost \$1 million aerial platform for \$877,000. The truck also was ordered before a series of costly federal mandates were implemented in 2009, saving Newton Fire/EMS almost \$50,000.

The new truck features the latest firefighting technology and will greatly enhance the department's service. The department's 2006 Fire Station Location and Resource Deployment Study specifically recommended the addition of an aerial platform:

"Moving from a 75-foot straight ladder to a 100-foot aerial platform adds an additional safety factor in operations. The extra footage will prove valuable in the new larger housing constructions that have longer setbacks from the roadway and truss construction on roofs that prevent conventional ventilation methods, and allows personnel to work from the safety of the basket."

The new truck will also be used in a more regional fashion. In large defensive fires and rescue situations, more than one ladder truck is typically needed. With this new aerial, Newton will be able to assist surrounding departments such as Hutchinson and Sedgwick County if needed during a fire or other rescue operation. Newton, in turn, will be able to call on those departments when it needs assistance.

The department's old truck was sold to the Hesston Fire Department, which did not previously have a ladder truck. This means an additional ladder truck will remain available for service within Harvey County.



Protecting safety

The new aerial platform will increase firefighter safety and bring the department into compliance with safety standards set by the National Fire Protection Association. Citizens of Newton will be afforded the protection and safety that only an aerial device can provide during firefighting and rescue



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Hotel/conference center

For many years the City has recognized the community's need for a high-quality event and meeting space able to accommodate large gatherings such as weddings and corporate events. City Commissioners were determined, however, not to have to raise taxes to meet that need.

The proposed hotel/conference center at Broadway and I-135 is a public-private partnership that achieves the City's goals in the most cost-effective manner possible.

The project includes approximately 15,000 square feet of conference and meeting space and a hotel with 70 to 80 guest rooms, plus two out-lots for additional commercial development. The conference center will feature an atrium-style great hall, large dividable ballroom, 360-square-foot boardroom, high-speed wireless Internet, sophisticated audio-visual capabilities, as well as food preparation areas and office space.

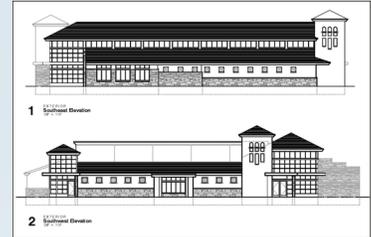
The hotel will be privately owned and constructed, and the conference center will be constructed and owned by the City. Total cost of the conference center is \$3.7 million. The City will make a down payment of \$750,000 using sales tax revenues the City has set aside for economic development projects. The remainder of the financing will come from the new tax revenues generated by the development.

The hotel will be partially financed with City bonds that will be paid off with interest by the developers. **No new taxes are needed to pay for the project, and no tax abatements will be offered to the developers.**

The economic and quality-of-life benefits to the community will be widespread.

The Newton Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau indicates that many requests for facilities to hold wedding receptions, private parties, and corporate banquets that exceed 250 people are turned away. Business travelers and other visitors to Newton often choose to stay outside the City because of the lack of higher-end hotel brands. That business is "leaking" to other cities in our area and is an economic loss for Newton. The new hotel/conference center will allow Newton to tap into those potential customers and keep their business in our community.

The hotel/conference center will also stimulate other local economic development. Shops, restaurants, gas stations and other services will benefit from the customers the hotel/conference center brings to the area.



Conference business

The new conference center will target its marketing efforts to attract more professional conferences to Newton in coming years.

Newton's Convention and Visitors Bureau bookings for conferences in 2010:

- The State Historic Preservation Annual Meeting
- The Regional Rotarian Annual Meeting
- The Gold Wing Association Annual Rally



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Water/sewer services

The City's water and wastewater services are highly regulated by the state and federal governments to ensure clean, fresh drinking water and environmentally safe wastewater effluent. Even with tight regulations, though, local operators still find opportunities to improve efficiencies and save money.

Energy savings

The Mission Plant and Wastewater Treatment Plant are part of the Westar Peak Load Program, which provides a discounted rate to the City. During times of high electrical demand, Westar can contact either plant and have them switch over to generator power operations, removing the plants from the grid and allowing Westar to use that power elsewhere. This saves the City thousands of dollars annually.

Efficient and smart

- The water meter replacement program annually replaces about 1,000 old meters that have begun to turn and register more slowly, giving false water usage information (showing less use by the customer). The newer meters are very accurate up to 1/100th of a gallon and allow everyone to be better stewards of our limited water supply.
- Variable frequency drives were installed on the pumps at the Mission Water plant as a way to operate this equipment more efficiently and increase its longevity, by not allowing startup voltage spikes. Soft starts were also installed on several of the sewer lift stations to eliminate voltage spikes and extend longevity.
- Numerous manholes in low-lying areas throughout town have been raised to eliminate the cost of treating excess water flowing into sanitary sewer lines after storm events. An extensive abatement program was performed several years ago on a door-to-door basis to educate citizens about disconnecting their sump pump discharge from the sanitary sewer line.
- Phase 1 improvements to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in 2009-2010 included the installation of a centrifuge, sludge-holding area and bio-solids handling, reducing the need to haul sludge off-site from 3 days a week to twice a month.

No-waste wastewater

About 30 percent of the treated wastewater effluent goes to Sand Creek Station Golf Course to use for both irrigation and aesthetics. This saves the golf course dollars since they don't have to buy treated water, and it saves the ground water for a more beneficial use.

Another 10 percent to 30 percent of the wastewater effluent is sent to the wetlands



Taking advantage of the wetlands

Consideration is being given to using the wetlands for storage and treatment of wastewater during high flows as Phase 2 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is designed for the most economical and environmentally friendly method of treatment for our community. Being able to capitalize on this use of the wetlands could help save thousands of structural improvement dollars if it is approved by KDHE.



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